

# Shorelines

*A Publication of the Lake Michigan Coastal Program*

## **Message from Mike**

It has been a busy few months for the IDNR LMCP and our partners. The LMCP continues to work with our local and state partners to identify projects that improve the quality of life in Northwest Indiana. This year the LMCP submitted 17 projects to our federal partner for review and funding. These projects further strengthen the investment in Northwest Indiana. We are proud of these efforts and look to build upon them in the coming years.

In addition, the LMCP is also planning several workshops and training opportunities to provide technical assistance to further strengthen the local planning and restoration capacity. These initiatives include the Envisioning Workshop, Public Priorities Session, Project Design and Evaluation Workshop, and the Coastal Community Development Workshop.

This newsletter is a further extension of our efforts to provide timely and informative news regarding coastal resource issues. We hope that you find it informative and useful. Read about Rain Gardening in Northwest Indiana, the Town of Munster's Heritage Park Oak Woodland Restoration, and updates on NOAA. We encourage you to participate in one or more of the opportunities presented on the events calendar. Together we can make a difference.

*Mike Molnar*



Shorelines is issued quarterly by the Lake Michigan Coastal Program.

To suggest an idea for an article, contact Susan Melnyk at (219) 926-9757 or [smelnyk@dnr.in.gov](mailto:smelnyk@dnr.in.gov).

This newsletter is part of our effort to increase communication with our partners and provide information and resources to our stakeholders. Please visit our website at [www.IN.gov/dnr/lakemich](http://www.IN.gov/dnr/lakemich).

## ***LMCP's Coastal Advisory Board***

A component of the LMCP, the **Coastal Advisory Board (CAB)** performs several vital roles including a diverse perspective on coastal issues and a close connection between the LMCP and local communities and citizens. CAB members represent a specific interest group. The CAB assists in setting priorities for the Coastal Grants Program and also provides input on applications to the grants program. Through the CAB, the public is invited to participate in LMCP projects, public meetings, and board meetings. The CAB also assist the Program in planning.

This past quarter, members were elected to serve a two-year term, and the CAB elected officers from the members. Dorreen Carey will serve as the CAB Chair, David Pilz as Vice-chair, and Paul Labus as Secretary. The CAB is planning a new committee structure to increase community involvement in coastal resource management.

**The next meeting is September 19th in Lake County.** The LMCP welcomes recommendations regarding a meeting location that meets the needs of the various stakeholder groups.

For a list of members and meeting dates please visit: [www.dnr.in.gov/lakemich/board/index.html](http://www.dnr.in.gov/lakemich/board/index.html)

## *Rain Gardening with LMCP*

**Rain Garden Initiative** A demonstration rain garden was installed this May in front of the Coastal Program Office which is located inside the Indiana Dunes State Park. A workshop that highlighted the benefits of rain gardens and how to install them was held prior to volunteers planting the demonstration rain garden. The Save the Dunes Conservation Fund and Northwest Indiana Regional Planning Commission provided training materials and presentations on native plantings and long-term maintenance of these gardens. The LMCP is also working with Save the Dunes Conservation Fund to install a rain garden at the new Porter County Visitor Center this spring. As part of the rain garden demonstration here at Dunes State Park, an informational sign will be on display. "Installing the rain garden was not only educational for the group; we also had a lot of fun. The enthusiasm of the volunteers shows how excited people are about rain gardens and protecting water quality." Jennifer Nebe, Save the Dunes Conservation Fund

*Rain gardens bring natural beauty back to our yards.* — Alison Scribailo, NIRPC Environmental Intern

Joe Exl, Coastal Nonpoint Coordinator for the LMCP, is working with local communities to address non-point source pollution, also known as polluted runoff. Runoff carries with it pet waste, fertilizers, insecticides and herbicides from lawns, and gasoline and oil leaked from passing cars, as well as traces of heavy metals and, in season, road deicing salts.

The LMCP has been working hard with its partners to collaborate on a cooperative rain garden outreach campaign. Unlike conventional gardens which are often planted in raised beds, rain gardens are planted in shallow basins. Rain gardens are designed to trap and cleanse storm water runoff before it enters our waterways. Typically, homeowners install rain gardens just down slope of their home's downspouts.

*Rain gardens bring out the best in communities.* — Amanda Peregrine, NIRPC MS4 Environmental Educator

Bioretention, the use of shallow, plant-filled basins to capture and cleanse runoff while it soaks into the soil, has been around for quite some time. This technique has been used by environmental engineers in various areas of the United States, and its cumulative effect on storm water flows can be significant. Its appeal includes the opportunity for citizens to become involved and have a positive impact on their environment. In addition, the use of native plants is appealing to local citizens who can showcase the complex of native grasses and perennials in their yards or community centers. In the coastal area, the Porter County Jail installed a rain garden, as well as the City of Valparaiso. As an educational tool, rain gardens increase public awareness of storm water as an environmental issue.

**Want to install a rain garden?** There are a number of great resources about rain gardens available online. For a comprehensive how-to guide check out "Rain Gardens: A how-to manual for homeowners" at <http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/water/wm/nps/rg/rgmanual.pdf>.

### Creating a Rain Garden

- 1 Identify a spot downhill from a downspout at least 10 feet from your home's foundation.
- 2 Test the absorption rate of the soil by digging a hole 6-8 inches deep. Fill with hole with water, measure how long it takes to drain. If it drains after 24-48 hours excavate a shallow basin to that depth.
- 3 Till the bottom of the basin, work in an inch or two of compost or sphagnum peat.
- 4 Use plants, preferably native, that thrive in moist to average soil conditions.
- 5 Mulch the rain garden and water during prolonged dry weather through the first growing season.



Rain garden training and field day at Indiana Dunes State Park



*Woodland Restoration bringing back the past and providing for the future of coastal communities.*

Woodlands are some of the richest habitat areas for plants and wildlife in Indiana, and often have historic features or links to past use, stretching back centuries. The Town of Munster worked with the community to strengthen the connection between citizens and the woodland in the oak woodland restoration on the 11.4 acre parcel Heritage Park.

Woodland restoration identifies historical, cultural, and ecological features of woods. The main goal of the project was to open the woodlands so oak could regenerate naturally and sustainably. A historic farmstead on site was overgrown, the 2-acre park site hosted black locust, and the 9-acre woodland showed aging oaks with little oak regeneration and heavy brush cover. The site was inventoried and a management plan drafted and supervised by project forester Gina Darnell. Phd. Botanist Naida Lehman joined the project for site analysis and supervision of native plant installations.

Education and partnering began with meetings with the town Park Board and the local historical society. Site signage was constructed and informational open houses were held prior to the project and during the implementation stage to consider what people had to say about the site. Adjacent landowners were most sensitive to site disturbances such as loss of privacy screening. Now that the site has had an opportunity to re-green, citizens are beginning to see the results of the restoration work and the woodland is seeing increased use for nature observation.



**Heritage Park after woodland restoration**

With resources for projects in short supply, building partnerships in the community as well as empowering citizens to become involved in protecting resources is the answer. Since the project began, partnerships have grown. Scouts have volunteered to plant trees and shrubs, build trails, build informational signage and a kiosk, and develop a tree brochure. Eagle Scout and Gold Award projects are in progress. The historical society has brought out school children to tour the site and pull garlic mustard. Master Gardeners are volunteering time for planting and weeding. The Wild Ones, a non-profit native plant society and the local garden club are potential partners for site maintenance. Bringing in more school groups to the site for education and volunteerism is planned for the future.



Once completely restored, Heritage Park will be the only area of remnant oak savannah/woodland left on this ancient dune ridge, giving people an opportunity to see - not subdivisions and roads-- but what the woodland, teeming with native plants, looked like during pre-settlement days. And appropriately so, as 2007 is the Centennial Celebration year for the Town of Munster.

**Local Boy Scout Troop assists with tree planting**

## Indiana's Lake Michigan

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*The purpose of the Indiana Lake Michigan Coastal Program is to enhance the State's role in planning for and managing natural and cultural resources in the coastal region and to support partnerships between federal, state and local agencies and organizations. The Indiana Lake Michigan Coastal Program relies upon existing laws and programs as the basis for achieving its purpose*



### Grants Program Update

#### 2007 Grants Approved by NOAA

The Lake Michigan Coastal Grants Program is proud to announce that NOAA has approved funding for all of the projects submitted for the 2007 Grants Cycle. There are seventeen projects requesting \$719,782 while committing over \$1 million in match. For a complete list and summary of the approved 2007 Grants please visit our website.

#### 2008 Funding Priorities – We Need Your Input!

One of the duties of the CAB is to solicit public input and vote on each funding year's priorities. Preference is given to projects that address one or more of these priorities. The July 18<sup>th</sup> Coastal Advisory Board meeting is dedicated to the solicitation of the 2008 Grants Cycle priorities. Coastal stakeholders, members of the public, and partners are encouraged to attend and speak about what they feel should be addressed by the next funding cycle of the Coastal Grants Program. If you are unable to make the CAB meeting, please contact the Program Specialist for a comment sheet.

### NOAA Envisioning the Future of Coastal Management

The LMCP attended a stakeholder visioning meeting in Chicago, Illinois on May 21 conducted by NOAA and the Coastal Service Center from Charleston, South Carolina. Mike Molnar and Jenny Orsburn participated in the forum along with about 40 people representing a wide range of coastal interests at the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago. The issues participants chose to discuss included habitat, climate change, water quality, land use/growth, intergovernmental relations, boating and water use/ waterfronts, and hazards.

The Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA) of 1972 created a unique partnership between federal and state governments with the goal of balancing the conservation of coastal and Great Lakes environments with the responsible development of economic and cultural resources. Pending reauthorization of the CZMA has prompted discussions within the coastal community on ways to improve coastal management in the U.S. In response, NOAA's Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management, which administers programs created by the CZMA, and the Coastal States Organization (CSO) are undertaking a project to engage coastal managers and stakeholders to envision the future of coastal management. The goal of this visioning process is to gather feedback on priority issues and innovative ideas for improving the CZMA and the National Coastal Management Program.

Initial discussions with Coastal Programs and State officials participating in the National Coastal Program identified growth and associated land use changes, habitat degradation, and decreasing water quality as the highest priority threats to the coastal resources of their states. In addition, they expect climate change to emerge as a major resource pressure in the future.

The LMCP and partners held a state sponsored workshop at Indiana University Northwest on June 29th to provide additional input to the process. This state workshop allowed additional stakeholders to provide their view of Coastal Management and highlight issues important to their group. This workshop was made possible through partnership with IUN SPEA, and Illinois Indiana Sea Grant Program. The results of the workshop are being compiled and will be submitted to NOAA and CSO.

These workshops are being held to generate innovative techniques and solutions, explore their feasibility, and assess their potential impacts and degrees of support.

Please visit NOAA's Web site at: [www.coastalmanagement.noaa.gov/czm/czma\\_vision.html](http://www.coastalmanagement.noaa.gov/czm/czma_vision.html)



## LMPC Calendar of Events

July 18	Coastal Advisory Board Meeting, Michigan City
September 8	NOAA 200th Event, Chicago
September 8-15	Coast Week 2007
September 10-11 and 12-13	Coastal Community Planning and Development Workshop
September 14	Denis Sullivan Tallship in Michigan City, Indiana
September 19	Coastal Advisory Board Meeting, Lake County

*For more information on these and any other upcoming LMCP events, please contact Susan Melnyk at [smelnyk@dnr.IN.gov](mailto:smelnyk@dnr.IN.gov).*

### ***2007 COAST WEEK CELEBRATION IS SEPTEMBER 8-15***

Partnerships and outdoor activities is the focus of this year's Coast Week celebration. Indiana's Coast Week is part of an annual nationwide program which is an effort to educate the public on the importance of protecting our coastal resources. Last year's events included nature hikes, beach cleans, and water quality exhibits. This year, Coast Week will also include NOAA's 200th Anniversary celebration in Chicago.